

Message Text

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71

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 FDRE-00 DHA-02 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 IO-13 EB-07

SAJ-01 SAM-01 /072 W

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P 180940Z AUG 76

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6220

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

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DEPARTMENT PASS AID FOR DISASTER RELIEF

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, CH

SUBJECT: SZECHWAN EARTHQUAKE

REF: PEKING 1621, HONG KONG 9752

1. NCNA ANNOUNCED AUGUST 17 THAT A "STRONG EARTHQUAKE" HAD HIT THE SUNGPAN-PINGWU AREA IN NORTHERN SZECHWAN PROVINCE AT 2206 HOURS (LOCAL) ON AUGUST 16. IT STATED THAT STRONG SHOCKS WERE FELT IN CHENG TU AND IN KANSU PROVINCE'S WUTU PREFECTURE. CHINA'S SEISMOLOGICAL INSTALLATIONS SPECIFIED THE MAGNITUDE OF THE QUAKE TO BE 7.2, WITH THE EPICENTER AT 32.7 DEGREES NORTH LATITUDE, 104.1 DEGREES EAST LONGITUDE. ACCORDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT, DAMAGES (SUN SHIH 227 "1136) WERE VERY LIGHT, THANKS TO ADVANCE WARNING.

2. PRELIMINARY REPORTS FROM JAPANESE SOURCES IN CHUNGKING AND CHENG TU STATE THAT BOTH PLACES EXPERIENCED ONLY RELATIVELY MODERATE TREMORS. THE JAPANESE PETROCHEMICAL PROJECT OUTSIDE CHENG TU REPORTEDLY SUFFERED NO DAMAGE. JAPANESE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TECHNICIANS REPORTEDLY SAW NO DAMAGE IN THE CITY WHICH THEY

TRANSITED EN ROUTE TO SHANGHAI AUGUST 17 (26 OF 28 JAPANESE
AT THE PLANT WERE EVACUATED AFTER THE QUAKE).

3. INFORMATION DEVELOPED HERE INDICATES THAT SZECHWAN
RESIDENTS HAD AMPLE WARNING OF AUGUST 16 QUAKE. JAPANESE
SOURCES ADVISE THAT VERY LIGHT TREMORS WERE EXPERIENCED IN
CHENG TU A MONTH AND A HALF AGO. JAPANESE TECHNICIANS IN
CHENG TU WERE TOLD ON AUGUST 7 TO EXPECT AN EARTHQUAKE IN THE
PERIOD AUGUST 13 TO 22. AN AMERICAN TECHNICIAN WITH THE KELLOGG
GROUP AT SHUIFU, YUNNAN (NOT NACHI, SZECHWAN--RERONEOUSLY
REPORTED REFTEL), WAS TOLD THE DAY BEFORE THE QUAKE THAT HE
SHOULD NOT TRANSIT CHENG TU BECAUSE OF EARTHQUAKE WARNINGS. A
JAPANESE TECHNICIAN IN CHENG TU MENTIONED IN A ROUTINE TELCON WITH
AN ASSOCIATE IN PEKING, JUST AN HOUR BEFORE THE QUAKE, THAT
CHINESE AUTHORITIES WERE TAKING PRECAUTIONS.
GATES

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